

United States Department of Agriculture
Decision to Restrict Competition under the Simplified Acquisition Threshold
Identification Number:

In accordance with the Revolutionary Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Overhaul (RFO) FAR 12.102 (a), the following documents the decision to restrict competition for this acquisition.

(1) Mission Area and Contracting Activity.

Requisition Number:	27-019 (Purchase Request Number from AD700)
Requesting Activity Agency:	U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Boise State Office, Snow Survey Dept., Boise, ID.
Contracting Activity:	FPAC-BC, Western Section

(2) Estimated Value

[REDACTED]

(3) Brief Description of Supplies or Services

NRCS Snow Survey proposes to procure snow measurement services by means other than full and open competition.

[REDACTED]

(4) Justification for Restricting Competition and the Basis for that Decision.

A. Explain the unique qualifications/characteristics of the proposed contractor or product and why no other contractor or product/service can meet the Government's need.

NRCS Snow Survey maintains an extensive automated (SNOTEL) and manual (Snow Course) data collection network in the Western United States and Alaska. Combined, the network encompasses nearly 2,000 remote snow measurement sites in mountain snowpack zones. Congress mandated NRCS (then the Soil Conservation Service) in the mid 1930's "to measure snowpack in the mountains of the West and forecast the water supply." NRCS Snow Survey now provides reliable and efficiently collected data needed to produce water supply forecasts and to support resource management activities across the Western US. The high-elevation watershed locations, broad coverage, and real-time operation of the network provide important data to farmers, researchers, river and reservoir managers, emergency managers for natural disasters such as floods and droughts, and for power generation. In some remote locations, private local contractors have been utilized to conduct critical manual snow measurements. The contractors have the wherewithal (over-snow travel equipment, snow samplers) and knowledge of local terrain to complete work in a timely manner. Additionally, local surveyors have many years of experience using a federal snow sampler, calculating snow-water-equivalent, and communicating results to the main NRCS Snow Survey office. These surveyors are unique in terms of the combination of location, equipment, and willingness. Lastly, data continuity between years is key to making NRCS Snow Data most useful and to decrease data uncertainty (error). Year-to-year data continuity is best achieved by utilizing the same surveyors as long as possible.

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B. Describe market research conducted and the results or the reason why no market research was conducted.

Multiple internet searches revealed one vendor in California, well outside of the immediate area. This vendor is not interested in performing these services in Idaho. Additionally, there were no other vendors in the immediate area capable of providing the requested services. Vendors completing this type of service have been doing so over a long period of time and are extremely familiar with the data requirements of NRCS. Other vendors not familiar with performing these services would cause undo hardship on the Government as there would be a significant learning curve for a new vendor. This learning curve would result in valuable data being lost and important milestones being missed and/or delayed because of additional training required for the new vendor. Due to the unique nature of Snow Survey work and the continued need for site specific knowledge, the suggested vendor is the best suited for this action.

Certifications & Approvals

